Good morning – As we continue our new normal of staying safe, sheltering at home, and doing as much of our work as possible remotely, you may not have given much thought to our Metcalfe office space. However, there's a team of people who have been working hard to improve our office environment while also ensuring we will be ready for upcoming records requirements. While they too are working remotely right now, I am happy to share this update, and some ideas for some activities you can do remotely in support of our movement to electronic records. We will all benefit from their efforts to open up and lighten our workspace, as will our regional foliage!

So, let me begin. Remember when you were in the office and you were seeing more records boxes moving around the building? What are we doing about all these empty file cabinets? Do you have more electronic records than paper records and are wondering how to maintain them? Read on and learn about the Records Program's success and goals for Region 5!

Background

On November 28, 2011, President Obama sent a Memorandum on Managing Government Records. The key message from this memorandum was for federal agencies to modernize their records program by updating records policies and practices into electronic formats. In the intervening years, EPA has worked on improving its records program by updating records schedules to ensure they are media-neutral and by working with our Information Technology Program to ensure the records program and policies are part of the plan for enhancements and improvements.

On June 28, 2019, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) sent Memorandum M-19-21 on transition to electronic records. This Memorandum states, ***By 2022, NARA will no longer accept transfers of permanent or temporary records in analog formats and will accept records only in electronic format and with appropriate metadata.***

Region 5's Progress

Records Consolidation Project

In 2017, Region 5 began the Records Consolidation Project. This project involves inventorying and dispositioning records in the Regional file rooms to reduce the number of file rooms currently being used by the year 2022. The ultimate goal is to have only the 7th Floor Superfund Records Center become the Regional Records Center. We are still on target to reduce our file rooms by 2022 and you can learn more about our progress on our Records Consolidation Project SharePoint site.

File Cabinet Project

Had you noticed empty file cabinets on your floor? We have too many, right? Well, this year, we started the first phase of removing empty file cabinets from the floors. These cabinets are being sold or recycled. We are repurposing the space for meeting areas or just opening up

areas to help "lighten" our work space. Our goal is to remove approximately 125 cabinets in the work areas of SEMD, MSD, GLNPO and ECAD this year. Are you wondering what our workspace will look like with less file cabinets? Check out the before and after pictures below. We will evaluate the success of this phase and develop a plan for our second phase. Information on our progress will be available on a SharePoint site soon!
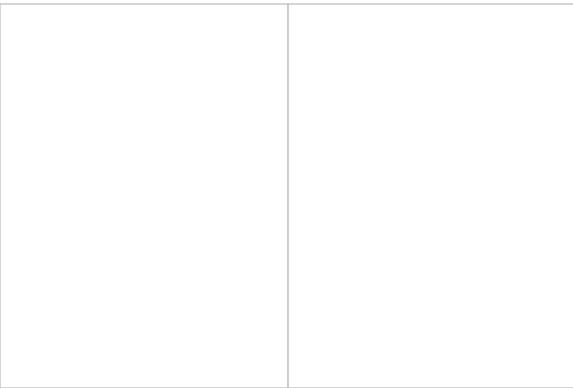
E-Records Policy

In September 2019, Region 5 created an E-Records Policy to address the growing use of electronic records. This document addresses the requirements and procedures for electronic storage of permanent and temporary records. We are in the process of upgrading the EDMS SharePoint site to the new R5ERC (R5 Electronic Records Center). R5ERC is being piloted by our Tribal Program and the Records Officers are working with other Divisions and Offices on adopting the R5 ERC. They will be working with each Division's Management Team to develop an electronic records strategy so Region 5 is ready for 2022!

How can you help?

Records management is everyone's responsibility, so what should you be doing?

1. Learn your responsibilities. This year, the Records Program is offering monthly training on a variety of Records topics. Keep an eye out on emails and Regional Round up items about upcoming trainings. Also ,the Record Officers have created tutorials on how to archive your outlook emails and your electronic documents. These are great portable work opportunities!

2. Keep informed on E-Records and other records policies. Information is available on One Records SharePoint site

3. Work with your Records Officers and staff to maintain your records.

4. Is your electronic file system working for you? Letting you quickly file, and later find what you need? If the answer isn't a resounding yes, think about how you might improve/adapt it to be more effective. Ask organized and tech savvy co-workers for their ideas!

Figure 1 empty file cabinets Figure 2 cabinets removed

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